**The News Versus the “New Media”**

A generation ago, most Americans looked to trusted news media – newspapers, news magazines, and broadcast news shows – for information on politics and public affairs. The news media rely on a small army of reporters, fact-checkers, and editors to research and report stories in an accurate, unbiased manner.

Beginning in the late 1980s, new ways to communicate with the public about politics began to appear. These “new” media include talk radio, television talk shows, televisions news magazines, televised town hall meetings, and cable comedy shows spoofing news of the day.

While running for president in 1992, Bill Clinton became a master at using the new media to talk directly to voters. He even appeared on MTV, playing his saxophone and fielding questions from young people.

More recently, news oriented Web logs, or blogs, have emerged as another new medium. A blog is a journal or newsletter posted on the internet. Because the web is essentially free, anyone can create a blog to distribute his or her opinions on the news of the day. Blogs are the most democratic and unregulated of all the news and new media. At times, these citizen-journalists have reported important news stories before any of the traditional media outlets.

Because bloggers do not have to follow the same standards for accuracy as professional journalists, their reports should be read with caution. Some of what passes for news on blogs may just be gossip, false rumor, or opinion.